



By the King.

A Proclamation for the better ordering of  
Fishing, vpon the Coasts of His  
MAIESTIES Dominions.



Mongst the manifold blessings, Almighty God hath bestowed vpon Our Kingdomes, and people, the abundance of Fish, vpon all Our Coasts, and in Our Riuers, requireth a most thankefull acknowledgement, being not onely sufficient to nourish Our owne Subiects, but by exportation to supply a great part of the Christian World: And without doubt, if the care and industry of Our people bee equall to Our Neighours, we may thereby enjou as great aduantage, for Our Navigation and Trade. But besides the great neglect in generall to improue this chiese Staple Commoditie, the particular disorders and abuses of Fisher-men amongst Us are growen to such extremitie, that they haue almost destroyed both the Fish, Frie, & Spawne, so as they now want worke, and are not as heretofore the Nurcery of Seamen, but are forced to get their living by other Occupations. And the former abundance of Fish is turned into such scarcitie and dearenesse, that the Lawes of Our Church and State for the keeping of Fish dayes are not executed as they ought to be: And both our Whole Kingdome, and especially Our Cittie of London, and euen Our owne Court, are many times vnprouided for their necessary dyet. Now considering how this reflecteth vpon Our Gouvernment, and the good of Our people, we haue thought fit with the aduise of Our Counsell, to apply that meete and forcible remedy which is already well ordeined by the Lawes & Statutes of this Our Kingdome. And hereby wee require and command all Our Commissioners for the Admiraltie, Conseruators of Our Riuers, Warden of Our Cinque-Ports, Viceadmirals, and all Our Officers and others, whom it may concerne, respectiuely to cause all the said Lawes and Statutes to be obserued, as well for preseruation of the Fish vpon Our Coasts and in Our Riuers, as for the regulating of Fisher-men in their Trade, in the qualities and sizes of their Nets and Engines, and in the tyme and sealons of Fishing. And whereas for further explanation of the Statutes and Lawes for Fishing, many profitable Orders haue beeene set downe, both by the High Court of Our Admiraltie, and by the Conseruators of Our Riuers, and by other Commissioners whiche by their due execution reformed much abuse; yet since the craft and greedinesse of Fisher-men and others, hath found meanes by new Engines or new names, to frustrate Law and Order; for preuention thereof hereafter, wee doe hereby declare, that howsoever these Lawes & Orders did specifie the names then in knowne vse, yet both the equitie and true meaning thereof, forbiddeth under those names, and by generall words also, all other Nets, Engines and disorders, whereby the Frie and Spawne of Fish may bee destroyed. And therefore where the Nets heretofore called Traules at the first were vsed without inconuenience, yet by the abuse of the Fisher-men a Net of the same name is now vsed, which is notoriously knowne to destroy the said Frie, & Spawne;

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And therefore the same is both forbidden by the Law, and wee doe hereby prohibite the vse of them and of all other Nets, howsoever they are or shall bee called, that haue not their Meshes sized according to the said Lawes and Orders, or by which the Fish of any kind with the Frie and Spawne may be destroyed: And further, Whereas it is reasonably conceiued that the destruction of Fish hath proceeded not so much from defect of Law and Order, as from want of due execution which is the life of Our Lawes, and that this neglect is chiefly growen from the Differences and Contes[t]ations raised amongst Our Officers & Conseruators about their Rights and Jurisdictions: Wee preferring the publique benefit of Our Subiects before their private Interests and Questions, doe ordaine that all Rights, Titles, Powers and Jurisdictions belonging to Our Admiraltie, or to the Conseruators of Our Rivers or other Our Officers shall be respectively reserved without prejudice or impeachment, and neuerthelesse doe hereby charge and command them and every of them that haue any trust from vs in Our said Admiraltie or Conseruation of Our Rivers, hereafter concurrently and severally to doe their best indeauors (according to the said trust committed to them) that Our said Lawes and Ordinances may bee put in due and strict execution both against Subiects and Strangers, and to take Cognisance of such Presentments as shall bee made in their Courtes or otherwise, and to punish all offenders according to the said Lawes and Orders Without fauour or partialitie, Providing neuerthelesse that no Offendor presented and legally questioned in one Court or before one such Officer or Conseruator, shall for the same offence be againe prosecuted and punished by any other. And further for prevention of Oppression, Molestation and discouragement that Fisher-men may suffer by the varietie of Jurisdictions and Officers to whom this power is giuen onely for the preseruation and furtherance of Lawfull fishing. And that no Malefactor may escape the iust censure of Our Lawes, Wee doe hereby require and strictly charge, as well the Commissioners and others Officers of Our Admiraltie, as also the Conseruators of all Our Rivers, and all other ministers that exercise in this regard any Authoritie vnder vs, that they neither require, nor take, nor suffer to be demanded or taken by their Marshall, Water-Bailiffs, or other Ministers, or by any other person for themselves or any other, any fees, rewards, gratuities, payments or allowances in money, Fish, or otherwise from any Fisherman of what qualitie soever, other then the due penalties which by the said Lawes and Orders are imposed and allowed.

Given at Our Court at Greenwich, This fourte and Twentieth day of May, in the seventh yeere of Our Reigne.

God saue the King.

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